

Groovy Gadgets

Closing The Gap 2009

By Maureen McKay, Optimistic Outcomes

Tips For A Smooth Transition Into Work:

- Investing a few minutes in the transition usually saves time by making the work session more productive.
- Kids benefit from “downloading” what’s on their mind. For example, ask a child something he’s proud of from the day.
- Set a timer for 3 minutes to chat with you about something other than school before starting schoolwork. When the timer rings, work begins. (Timers take adults out of the role of ending the fun.)
- Ease into work mode by having kids do a small task before jumping into work. For example, organizing their workspace, sharpening their pencils, or gathering the supplies they will need for an assignment.

If You Use Incentives/Rewards:

- Show students how to set attainable schoolwork goals.
- Keep rewards/incentives for achieving schoolwork goals simple.
- Explain how adults make promises to motivate themselves through hard work. For Example: “Once I finish the laundry, I will read my magazine.”
- The best reward is an interpersonal connection, not stuff.

Common Traits of 3 Learning Styles:

The more senses we use for learning information, the better chance it will be understood and remembered. The strongest learners practice all styles. Print a free learning style survey at www.OptimisticOutcomes.com



Kinesthetic Learners:

- ✓ Learn best while doing something or being active.
- ✓ Like to move and fidget.
- ✓ Don’t enjoy watching presentations.
- ✓ Don’t enjoy listening to presentations.
- ✓ Touch, manipulate, try things.
- ✓ Use gestures when speaking.
- ✓ Enjoy moving to music.

Auditory Learners:

- ✓ Absorb information from spoken words.
- ✓ Enjoy dialog, plays, and drama.
- ✓ Like to hum.
- ✓ Talk to self and others to process new information.
- ✓ Learn concepts by listening.
- ✓ Read by using a phonetic approach.

Visual Learners:

- ✓ Remember best what they see.
- ✓ Gather information from diagrams.
- ✓ Enjoy watching demonstrations.
- ✓ Visualize things.
- ✓ Do not talk at length.
- ✓ Get impatient listening for long periods of time.
- ✓ Prefer visual arts/media.
- ✓ Read using whole-word recognition.

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Movement and Movement Tools:

Movement stimulates the brain. That's why so many kids chew gum, tap a pencil on their desk, bounce their legs up and down, doodle, or fidget while learning. They are naturally trying to keep their brain focused on the task at hand. Take advantage of this knowledge.

- Movement increases attention.
- Movement reduces stress.
- Fidgeting can help kids focus and absorb information more quickly.
- Many children will study better and faster if they are allowed to move.

Brain Breaks:

Movement reduces stress and increases oxygen to the brain, which improves concentration and learning. Use short "brain breaks" during schoolwork when your student gets "stuck" or frustration builds. Brain breaks should only last a minute or two. They will enable your student's brain to get "unstuck" and his wiggles and frustration to subside.

- Run around the room three times, do jumping jacks, or engage in some other activity that will allow a release of energy and refocus.
- Slowly roll your ear lobes with your thumb and forefinger. Go all the way around your ear.
- Place your elbows at shoulder height. Make big circles with your elbows. Reverse direction.
- Do shoulder shrugs, rolling forward and backward.
- Pinch your forefingers to your thumbs and hold them out in front of you. Use these pinched fingers to trace circles going in the same direction. Reverse direction. Trace circles going in opposite directions.

Examples of Kinesthetic and Movement Tools:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| ▪ Balance Balls | ▪ Magic Loops |
| ▪ Balance Cushions | ▪ Pedometers |
| ▪ Chairs | ▪ Sand Trays |
| ▪ Squishy Balls | ▪ Cinnamon/Mint/Sour/Spicy/
Crunchy Foods |
| ▪ Wikki Stix | ▪ Essential Oils |
| ▪ Clicking Fidgets | |

Examples of Auditory Tools:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| ▪ Ear Plugs | ▪ Recorders |
| ▪ Headphones and Noise-
Cancelling Headphones | ▪ Walkie-Talkies |
| ▪ Bubble Wrap | ▪ Timers |

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Examples of Visual Tools:

- Highlighters
- Repositionable Notes
- Gadget Bookmarks
- Transparencies/Highlighter Strips
- Sheet Protectors
- Proofreading Marks
- Lists
- Letter Tiles/Stamps
- Index Cards
- Keyboarding
- Correction Tape and Erasers
- Pencils and Grips
- Thesaurus'
- Electronic and Online Dictionaries
- Flashlight
- Mind Map
- Dice
- Counting Chips
- Money/Coupons
- Calculator
- Clocks/Timers
- Calendars
- Online Grade Books
- Stapler/Tape/Binding Rings/ Clips
- Name Labels
- Accordion Folders and Hanging Files
- Plastic Envelopes

Favorite Catalogs/Sites:

Optimistic Outcomes: www.optimisticoutcomes.com

Download Free Strategies and a Free Learning Style Inventory

Parenting Perspectives blog: <http://optimisticoutcomes.blogspot.com/>

Clever Container: www.clevercontainer.com

Abilitations: www.abilitations.com

Attainment Company: www.attainmentcompany.com

Beacon Ridge: www.beacon-ridge.com

Flag House Special Populations: www.flaghouse.com

MindWare: www.mindwareonline.com

Sensory Comfort: www.sensorycomfort.com

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~David Walsh, Ph.D.—Founder, National Institute on Media and Family